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ABSTRACT

In 1991-92, a study was conducted to refine and implement a system for evaluating the California Community Colleges' vocational education special projects funded under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984. The study focused on the 110 projects funded in 1988-89 and 1989-90, assessing their achievement of federal and state goals. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through a document review and site visits (N=24) and phone interviews (N=86) with project directors, project staff, and Chancellor's Office staff. Highlighted findings included the following: (1) two problems identified in conducting the evaluation were the inability to interview staff from all projects funded and the time lag between a given funding cycle and the subsequent evaluation; (2) while a significant majority of special projects accomplished most or all of their proposed objectives, including improved partnerships with business and industry, remaining problems included minimal funding for projects targeting the handicapped, a lack of commitment to institutionalize the projects once funding had ended, and a lack of knowledge about similar projects; (3) while timeliness of funding was critical to the success of a project, more than two-thirds of the projects received delayed funding; and (4) due to the wide variety of products (including databases, resource and instructional documents, newsletters, videos, software, and promotional materials) resulting from the special projects, the need for a document, database, or clearinghouse of previous and current special projects was evident. Appendixes include the site visit interview guide questionnaire and an agency index of special projects. (JSP)

ED346895

FINAL REPORT ON SPECIAL PROJECT 90-0406 EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES' VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SPECIAL PROJECTS

Evaluation & Training Institute
12401 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90025

August 28, 1991 - May 31, 1992

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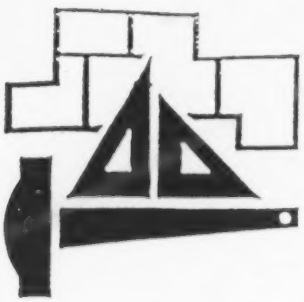
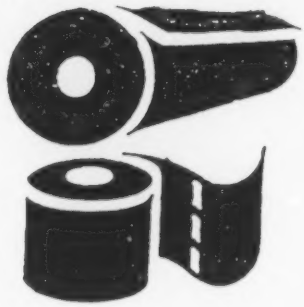
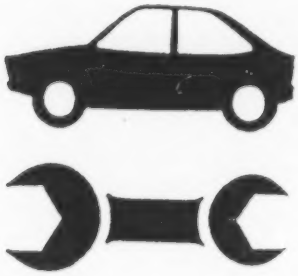


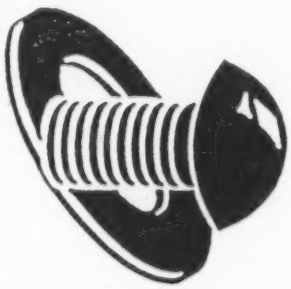


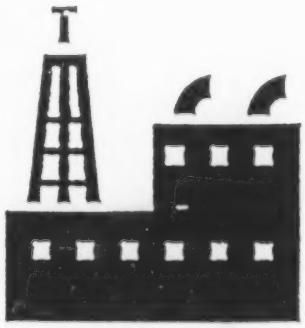


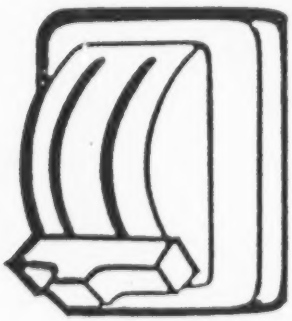
Final Report

Evaluation of the California Community Colleges' Vocational Education Special Projects 1988-89 and 1989-90

Contract Number 90-0406







ETI

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under mandate of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-542), state agencies are required to evaluate the performance and reporting procedures of local educational agencies under contract. In addition, state agencies have an obligation to evaluate the dissemination of the products of program improvement activities. The reauthorization of the Act in 1990 further legislates the development and implementation of evaluation systems and standards to improve accountability. In 1991, the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI) was contracted by the Chancellor's Office to conduct the evaluation of special projects for projects funded in the 1988-89 and 1989-90 program years.

The overall objective of this study was to refine and implement a system for evaluating vocational education special projects funded under P.L. 98-542. ETI also proposed to: develop instrumentation and conduct data collection activities; prepare an evaluation report that details individual summaries of project outcomes; prepare a final evaluation report synthesizing the statewide results; and ensure that 100 percent of the materials developed for this project promote gender fairness.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions are based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected during interviews with project directors, project staff, Chancellor's Office staff, and the document review. The conclusions and recommendations are offered below in sections on special projects evaluation, project achievements, administration and management, and dissemination.

Special Projects Evaluation

Two problems were identified in conducting this evaluation of 1988-89 and 1989-90 special projects: the inability to interview staff from **all** of the projects funded to produce a complete summary of projects and the need for an evaluation of special projects to occur in a timeframe in which project contacts would still be familiar with the projects from the given funding cycles.

Recommendations:

Project directors need to be clearly aware of pending special projects evaluations so that they or knowledgeable staff will available for interviews. In many cases during this study, project contacts did not return calls or no current staff at the contracting agency could provide details on past projects.

The evaluation of special projects should be conducted as soon after the culmination of the funding cycle to ensure best possible results from data collection activities. In many cases, project contacts could not give specific details regarding projects because many of the projects had been completed more than two years earlier.

Project Achievements

A significant majority of special projects accomplished most or all of their proposed objectives. The variety of products produced through special project funding was extensive, including databases, resource and instructional documents, newsletters, videos, curricula, software, and promotional materials. In accordance with VEA emphases, communication, linkages and partnerships were established and/or improved with business and industry, as well as between the public and private sectors. A number of projects established mechanisms to ensure institutionalization beyond special projects funding. Areas for improvement in project achievements include a lack of knowledge at the local level to conduct extensive evaluation procedures to evaluate and improve the quality of projects, minimal funding for projects targeting handicapped students, lack of commitment to institutionalize once funding has ended, and lack of knowledge of similar projects which could serve as resources. Overall, the achievements of local and statewide projects served to meet and further the goals of the state and nation.

Recommendations:

Improved local evaluation should be facilitated through the Chancellor's Office by developing specific activities and strategies for local project evaluation. Although there are evaluation activities and strategies in use, many of the projects did minimal evaluation because they lacked knowledge of feasible evaluation procedures. Others assumed their project would be evaluated by third-party and conducted no internal evaluation activities.

Alternative funding sources should be identified for local projects which may want to institutionalize their project once funding has ceased, but lack the necessary support or funding. The long-term impact of special projects will be impressive if a majority of these projects are institutionalized, continued, and expanded.

A resource document or database of all special projects, past and current, should be developed and disseminated to the colleges to assist in eliminating duplicative efforts and provide resources for similar projects. Many of the project directors felt their projects could have been maximized by knowledge of prior projects which could have reduced duplication and "reinventing the wheel."

Administration and Management

More than two-thirds of the projects in the funding years received delayed funding. Project contacts universally stated that the timeliness of funding was critical to the success and lack of success of their project. In addition, communication between state staff and local projects regarding funding delays needs to be improved. Contracting agencies expressed interest in more field consulting by project monitors to improve the administration of their projects and requested the Chancellor's Office provide more monitors to lessen the number of projects for which each monitor is responsible.

Recommendations:

The process for special project approval and start should be simplified to ensure minimum delays in funding. The window between verbal approval and contracting needs to be as short as possible since many projects must commit resources and time based on their proposed start rather than contract approval. Project directors felt the organization required to prepare the project and establish the resources and contacts was undercut by up to six months delay.

The Chancellor's Office should allow more time and resources for project monitors to visit all of their projects to alleviate future reporting problems, miscommunication, and ensure that project directors and staff understand the direction of their projects to accomplish proposed goals. This recommendation is especially needed for first-time contractors.

Although project monitors averaged more than six projects for which they were responsible, some monitored up to 17. An average of six

to eight seems reasonable to achieve the best communication and results possible, but no monitor should be responsible for more than 10 or 12 projects.

Dissemination

As mentioned above, a wide variety of products were produced as a result of special projects funding. ETI staff did not compare proposed dissemination activities to final reports to determine the extent to which dissemination was carried out, but a need for a document, database, or clearinghouse of previous and current special projects products was determined.

Recommendation:

The Chancellor's Office should establish a mechanism for past and current documents and products produced through the Chancellor's Office funding to assist in eliminating duplicative efforts and provide resources for similar projects.

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INTRODUCTION

Under mandate of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-542), state agencies are required to evaluate the performance and reporting procedures of local educational agencies under contract. In addition, state agencies have an obligation to evaluate the dissemination of the products of program improvement activities. The reauthorization of the Act in 1990 further legislates the development and implementation of evaluation systems and standards to improve accountability.

In the past, the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges has funded third-party evaluations of vocational education special projects to comply with this requirement. In 1991, the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI) was contracted by the Chancellor's Office to conduct the evaluation of special projects for projects funded in the 1988-89 and 1989-90 program years.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this study was to refine and implement a system for evaluating vocational education special projects funded under P.L. 98-542. The four specific objectives undertaken by ETI to conduct this evaluation were to:

1. Develop instrumentation and conduct data collection activities to evaluate 112 vocational education special projects for the 1988-89 and 1989-90 funding years;

2. Prepare an evaluation report suitable for publication and dissemination to local education agencies and others that details individual summaries of project outcomes;

3. Prepare a final evaluation report synthesizing the statewide results and describing: the quality of special project outcomes in terms of progress toward state and national goals; effective use of resources; suggestions for future project funding; synthesis of statewide results; and recommendations for improved administration and evaluation of special projects by the vocational education unit; and

4. Ensure that 100 percent of the materials developed for this project promote gender fairness.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the objectives of this evaluation study, ETI conducted a document review, telephone interviews with project directors, and site visits to a statewide sample of vocational education special projects. Each of the 11 primary research activities is described below.

Met with Project Monitor

The ETI project manager met with the project monitor to review the proposed timeline and activities. Additionally, procedures for maintaining contact during the study and arrangements for obtaining necessary documents were discussed.

Prepared and Disseminated Statewide Information Letter

A letter was prepared by ETI to inform 1988-89 and 1989-90 project directors of the evaluation study and to request their cooperation in providing evaluation data. This letter was reviewed by the project monitor and distributed to the project directors subsequently.

Reviewed Project Documentation

ETI staff obtained and reviewed pertinent documents from the Chancellor's Office for the project funding years. These documents included abstracts of all projects funded in the evaluation period, previous special projects' evaluation final reports and project summaries, and overall funding data.

Developed Data Collection Instrumentation

Project staff reviewed and refined existing data collection instruments. Two instruments were developed for use in this evaluation: an instrument for the telephone survey of project directors and a more extensive questionnaire for use during the on-site visits. The surveys were designed to gather

information regarding project goals and activities, project management, funding issues, project outcomes, and relevance to national and state goals for vocational education. All data collection instruments were reviewed and approved by the Chancellor's Office project monitor. A copy of the survey instruments is attached as the appendix to this report.

Conducted On-site Visits and In-person Interviews with a 20 Percent Sample of Vocational Education Special Projects

ETI staff conducted visits to a statewide sample of 24 vocational education special projects. The distribution of sites is illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page. A review of project abstracts was used to determine sites for visits. A sample selection was made and submitted to the Chancellor's Office for review and approval. During the site visits, in-depth interviews were conducted with project directors and other primary personnel involved in conducting the projects. Summaries of each visit were developed and reviewed by the project director.

Conducted Telephone Interviews

ETI staff conducted telephone interviews with the remaining 86 project directors. As with the site visits, summaries of each interview were developed and reviewed by the project director.

Interviewed Chancellor's Office Staff

In-person interviews with four Chancellor's Office project monitors and the Chancellor's Office Dean of Vocational Education were conducted by project staff. Guides for these interviews were developed and focused on four key areas: successful and unsuccessful elements of projects; communication between the Chancellor's Office and the field; the impact of special projects on national and state goals for vocational education; and recommendations for improvements and future funding.

Prepared Report of Project Summaries

A stand-alone document of project summaries was developed for 110 vocational education special projects. The report was divided by project year and funding category. All summaries included the project title, name of contractor, name and telephone number of project contact, and funding

Figure 1
California Community Colleges
Vocational Education Special Projects
1991-92 Evaluation Site Visits

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information. Additionally, each summary contained an overview of the goals and activities of the project, management structure, and project outcomes. A draft report was submitted to the project monitor for review and approval. A copy of the final version of the project summaries document was made available to vocational education deans of community colleges statewide, as well as other local education agencies expressing interest. One copy was submitted to ERIC.

Analyzed Data

ETI senior staff analyzed both the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the document review, on-site and in-person interviews, and telephone interviews. Outcomes of the analysis were instrumental in preparing the final report.

Prepared Final Evaluation Report

This final report documenting project activities and outcomes was prepared and submitted to the Chancellor's Office. Analyses of the quality of project outcomes with respect to national and state goals for vocational education, successful and unsuccessful elements of the special projects, and recommendations for improvements, were emphasized in this final evaluation report. ETI provided the Chancellor's Office with one camera-ready copy and 30 photocopies of the final report. Copies of this final report were also made available to the vocational education deans of the community colleges statewide.

Promoted Gender Fairness

ETI senior staff, in collaboration with the project monitor, continually reviewed all materials developed for this project to ensure the promotion of gender fairness, in accordance with federal and state mandates.

This following sections of this report document the findings, conclusions and recommendations of ETI's evaluation.

FINDINGS

Project Characteristics

The Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges awarded more than $6,000,000 of Carl D. Perkins' funds for special projects in 1988-89 and 1989-90. Specifically, in 1988-89, $2,735,778 in VEA funds were awarded to 52 special projects and in 1989-90, $3,445,830 was awarded to 58 special projects.

Table 1 reflects the number of projects as delineated by funding section. In addition to the number of projects, Table 1 also shows the total amount per section, average and range. In 1988-89, 22 Professional Development special projects received over 1.2 million dollars from the Chancellor's Office. Eight Research and eight 2+2 Articulation projects received over $417,000 and $281,000, respectively. While Professional Development averaged over $60,000 per project, five Curriculum Development projects averaged more than $53,000.

In 1989-90, the Chancellor's Office awarded nearly $1,000,000 for 12 Research projects. Eight Innovative special projects received over $740,000 while 14 Professional Development projects garnered nearly $600,000. Community Based Organizations special projects had the highest average per project (excluding Criminal Offenders) at $130,950. As is annually the case, the largest awards in each funding year were given to the Department of Corrections Criminal Offenders project to supplement vocational training programs for incarcerated individuals.

Table 1
1988-89

Section	Number	Total Amount	Average	Range: Minimum	Maximum
1. 2+2 Articulation	8	$281,422	$40,203	$20,000	$44,000
2. Community Based Organizations	3	$147,600	$49,200	$49,200	$49,200
3. Criminal Offenders	1	$322,439	$322,439	$322,439	$322,439
4. Curriculum Development	5	$267,034	$53,407	$35,000	$90,000
5. Innovative	2	$20,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
6. Professional Development	22	$1,270,081	$60,480	$19,935	$155,367
7. Research	8	$417,207	$52,151	$15,000	$135,600
8. Student Organizations	3	$9,995	$3332	$2,495	$5,000

1989-90

Section	Number	Total Amount	Average	Range: Minimum	Maximum
1. 2+2 Articulation	9	$255,082	$28,342	$15,000	$79,800
2. Community Based Organizations	3	$392,851	$130,950	$99,900	$172,800
3. Criminal Offenders	1	$342,084	$342,084	$342,084	$342,084
4. Curriculum Development	3	$45,000	$22,500	$5,000	$40,000
5. Innovative	8	$740,197	$92,525	$30,000	$228,552
6. Professional Development	14	$595,724	$42,552	$5,000	$135,247
7. Research	12	$969,196	$80,766	$8,585	$266,495
8. Student Organizations/Services	8	$105,696	$13,212	$4,969	$24,910

(Total funding may differ because cancelled projects are not included)

Table 2 shows the number and amount of projects funded by Title and Part. In both funding years, the majority of special projects were funded through Title II B-Program Improvement monies. For 1989-90, two categories of funding were not funded: Title II A-Handicapped and Title II A-Disadvantaged. Title II B-Program Improvement had the largest increase in the number of projects and funding from 1988-89 to 1989-90, with 10 more projects and an increase of $712,495, while Title III A-Community Based Organizations funds had the largest average increase.

Table 2
1988-89

Funding Source	Number	Amount
Title II A-Handicapped	2	$99,715
Title II A-Disadvantaged	3	$115,215
Title II A-Adult Training	2	$150,000
Title II A-Criminal Offenders	1	$322,439
Title II A-Single Parent/Sex Equity Combined Funding	4	$269,918
Title II A-Sex Equity/Title II B Combined Funding	1	$80,000
Title II B-Program Improvement	33	$1,381,107
Title II B/Title III B Combined Funding	1	$100,000
Title III A-Community Based Organizations	3	$147,600
Title III B-Consumer Homemaker Education	2	$69,784
Total	52	$2,735,778

1989-90

Funding Source	Number	Amount
Title II A-Single Parents	3	$73,595
Title II A-Sex Equity	1	$30,000
Title II A-Adult Training	1	$150,000
Title II A-Criminal Offenders	1	$342,084
Title II A-Single Parent/Sex Equity Combined Funding	4	$254,545
Title II A-Sex Equity/Title II B Combined Funding	1	$84,153
Title II B-Program Improvement	43	$2,093,602
Title III A-Community Based Organizations	3	$392,851
Title III B-Consumer Homemaker Education	1	$25,000
Total	58	$3,445,830

Thirty-six of the 52 projects funded by the Chancellor's Office in 1988-89 were community colleges and/or community college districts. That number grew to 42 of the 58 projects in 1989-90. The distribution of other contractors for special projects in 1988-89 and 1989-90 was as follows: private firms, seven and 11; universities and university foundations, seven and three; and public agencies (Department of Corrections and the Employment Development Department) were awarded two projects in each program year.

Project Management

In 1988-89, eight project monitors were assigned to the 52 special projects, with each monitor working with two to 17 projects each. During 1989-90, each of the nine project monitors worked with one to 17 special projects. According to the project contacts interviewed, the majority of projects (81 percent) had contact at least once per month with the Chancellor's Office project monitor, with 31 percent having contact on a weekly basis. Eighty percent of the project contacts interviewed felt that their project monitor was "very accessible" while 10 percent felt the monitor's were "not very accessible". Two primary issues emerged during the interviews:

- Project contacts felt Chancellor's Office staff should be available to visit projects to lend on-site technical assistance and a better understanding of the project's goals, but understood the time restraints due to the number of projects for which each monitor was responsible. They suggested a lower monitor to project ratio would improve the quality of projects and reduce the need for constant communication regarding project direction and budgeting; and

- Project contacts recommended improved timeliness and communication regarding allocation of funds, particularly should the funding be delayed. Many projects noted that they had to adhere to strict timelines, and late funding essentially nullified ability to achieve the proposed results.

Chancellor's Office staff also mentioned the above issues as barriers in the administration and management of special projects. They emphasized improvement in "turn-around time" for contract approval and payment to the contractors as important areas to improve upon. Some monitors felt the focus of project evaluation should be on product dissemination in addition to project achievement of stated goals, which would improve knowledge of previous projects and create stronger resources statewide.

While the majority of projects were scheduled for nine to 12 months, 67 percent of the projects funded in both program years received late funding. This led to the cancellation of three projects and changes in many others. Some projects were modified and conducted in three to six months. Still, 70 percent of the projects interviewed claimed to utilize all funds allotted. Fifteen percent of the project contacts felt they were not adequately informed about how the budget process worked while the majority of others did not realize the extent to which their funding would be delayed.

Project contacts praised the use of Advisory Committees in assisting to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate special projects. Ninety-five percent of the projects interviewed for both project years utilized Advisory Committees with many involving business and industry, and community resources as well as community college personnel.

Project Activities and Achievement of Objectives

A variety of activities were conducted to accomplish the goals and objectives of special projects in 1988-89 and 1989-90, including: workshops; on- and off-site technical assistance; surveys; development of handbooks and resource manuals; creation of information systems; curriculum development, implementation and modification; creation and utilization of Advisory Committees; staff development for faculty and administration; creation and dissemination of newsletters; internships; identification of model programs; mentorships; document review; and local and statewide conferences.

For both funding years, more than three-quarters of the projects (76 percent) submitted final reports to the Chancellor's Office according to the

project contacts. Project contacts were asked to assess whether their project exceeded, met or fell below its goals:

- More than one-third (35 percent) of the project contacts felt their project exceeded its goals. Contributing factors for projects exceeding its goals included high level of input and activity from Advisory Committees, exceeding the target number of beneficiaries and/or contacts, and conducting successful projects in a limited amount of time due to funding delays;

- Forty-seven percent of the project contacts stated they met their project's goals;

- Seventeen percent of the project contacts felt they had fallen below the goals of the project. Reasons for not meeting goals included the lack of timely funding, change in project personnel, lack of enthusiasm for the project by administration, unrealistic objectives, and difficulties in scheduling.

- Chancellor's Office staff concurred that the majority of projects had met or exceeded their objectives. In many cases, objectives and activities were modified due to delayed funding, but the overall consensus was that projects achieved their stated objectives.

Successful and Unsuccessful Elements

A number of elements contributing to successful projects were mentioned by project directors and state staff. The most frequently attributed successful element related to developing and utilizing a strong and active Advisory Committee. In addition, involving business and industry in some capacity on the project was also emphasized. The increased communication with the private sector was cited as a key toward developing partnerships and linkages with business and industry. In staff development projects, gaining support from high level administration was important to a successful project. Similarly, enthusiastic project staff contributed to the success of the project, according to the colleges. Use of videos, computers, and technologically current equipment were mentioned as effective elements to recruit and retain students.

Chancellor's Office staff felt the keys to successful projects were in having a well-planned and organized proposal, a high level of enthusiasm and involvement by the project directors, utilization of a strong advisory body and field input, frequent communication between project staff and the project monitor, and flexibility.

Elements that led to unsuccessful projects included change and/or lack of leadership in the project, delayed funding which included conducting too many activities in a shortened amount of time, lack of communication between the project director and project monitor, inability to institutionalize or continue project, unrealistic objectives, and misinterpretation of the requirements of the Request for Proposals.

Project Beneficiaries

Of the projects which proposed to serve individuals and or groups, 39 percent were targeted to students, 26 percent to instructors, 17 percent to administrators, 13 percent to counselors, and four percent to others in both funding years. Targeted student populations included minorities, disabled students, single parents, displaced homemakers, re-entry students, limited English speakers, and economically disadvantaged students.

Project contacts reported that their projects directly served an average of 30 to 50 beneficiaries but some reported as few as six people being directly served and two reported more than 1,500. More than one-third (35 percent) of the projects directly served more than 150 persons. No research was conducted to determine the total number of persons served, as many of the projects could only estimate the level of impact.

Evidence of Effectiveness

ETI gathered evaluation information from the project contacts during the telephone and on-site interviews. For both funding years, 74 percent of the projects reported that they conducted some type of evaluation activity. Evaluation activities ranged from workshop participant evaluations and student satisfaction surveys, to state mandated third party evaluations. Of those that conducted evaluation activities, 36 percent were evaluated by a third party.

Dissemination

Thirty-seven percent of the projects disseminated a final product, other than an executive summary of the final report, statewide in 1988-89 and forty-two percent in 1989-90. Some of the final products disseminated by projects included videos, handbooks, resource documents, software, promotional materials, and curriculum. Final products were distributed to Deans of Vocational Education in 62 percent of the projects, state monitors in 62 percent of the projects, Deans of Instruction in 36 percent of the projects, and instructors and participants in 35 percent and 32 percent of the projects, respectively. Final products were also disseminated to public and private agencies, secondary school representatives, community based organizations and libraries. For 1988-89, eight percent of special projects disseminated the final report or product to ERIC or other on-line information systems and 14 percent in 1989-90.

Impact of Special Projects in Terms of Federal Purposes

Each of the nine federal purposes of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act follows with discussion of how special projects met or complemented it.

1. **Assist the states to expand, improve, modernize and develop quality vocational education programs in order to meet the needs for the nation's existing and future work force for marketable skills and to improve productivity and promote economic growth.**

    - Ninety-five percent of the projects established vocational education advisory committees, many of which were comprised by representatives from business and industry;

    - Three projects in each funding year were specifically developed to improve linkages between the community colleges and business and industry, and more than 10 other projects were designed to establish internships and mentorships with the private sector;

    - In both 1988-89 and 1989-90, comparisons of local labor market information to local vocational training were conducted and disseminated statewide;

- Projects were developed to tailor curricula to respond to and meet the needs of business and industry; and

- Competencies, in many vocational and basic skills areas, were established or updated in response to private sector needs.

2. **Assure that individuals who are inadequately served under vocational education programs are assured access to quality vocational education programs especially individuals who are handicapped, men and women entering nontraditional occupations, adults in need of training and retraining, individuals who are single parents or homemakers, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals who are incarcerated in correctional institutions.**

   - In 1988-89, two projects were funded under Title A-Handicapped monies and specifically designed to improve services and programs for disabled students;

   - One project was specifically designed to technically assist colleges to comply with the Federal Rehabilitation Act by developing a resource handbook;

   - In both 1988-89 and 1989-90, more than 25 projects were developed to improve services and programs for single parents, displaced homemakers, non-traditional students and single pregnant women. Additionally, communication and cooperation was enhanced by further regional organization of single parent and displaced homemaker program coordinators;

   - A clearinghouse of single parent, displaced homemaker, and non-traditional information was developed to link the coordinators of those programs statewide;

   - A number of programs were developed to target minority students, including retention strategies, employment and internship opportunities;

   - More than $700,000 was apportioned to supplement vocational training to incarcerated persons; and

- Projects were developed which solicited input from social services, GAIN and Department of Rehabilitation, and those agencies participated in numerous advisory committees.

3. **Promote greater cooperation between public agencies and the private sector in preparing individuals for employment, in promoting the quality of vocational education in the states, and in making the vocation system more responsive to the labor market in the states.**

   - As stated above, numerous projects were developed to meet the needs of business and industry;

   - Over the two funding years, at least 20 projects were funded to state agencies, required cooperation between the public, private and education sectors, and/or established resources or data for business and community contacts;

   - Inclusion of the private sector in curriculum development; and

   - At least four projects were implemented with a focus on emerging technologies.

4. **Improve academic foundations of vocational students and to aid in the application of newer technologies (including the use of computers) in terms of employment or occupational goals.**

   - A number of projects focused on new technology, either in developing or refining existing curriculum and exploring linkages with computer and software companies;

   - One project was specifically funded to conduct a review of existing vocational education computer materials; and

   - More than six projects over the two years were designed to establish on-line networks and databases for statewide use.

5. **Provide vocation education services to train, retrain, and upgrade employed and unemployed workers in new skills for which there is a demand in that state or employment market.**

   - Two projects were designed to examine labor market supply and demand, and influence curriculum development toward

those areas needed by local business and industry;

- A number of curriculum projects were developed to upgrade out-of-date existing curriculum; and

- Opportunities for hands-on experience were provided by more than 10 projects which focused on internships and mentoring/shadowing programs.

6. **Assist the most economically depressed areas of a state to raise employment and occupational competencies of its citizens.**

   - No specific evidence was collected regarding project funding for economically depressed areas of the state, but competencies for vocational education programs were developed in 1989-90.

7. **Assist the states to utilize a full range of supportive services, special programs, and guidance counseling and placement to achieve the basic purposes of this Act.**

   - "Coordinating" and regional organization projects were developed to give support to similar projects in the areas of articulation and single parent/displaced homemaker programs; and

   - More than 10 projects targeted staff development for counselors, many of which focused on developing counseling strategies to meet the needs of "new Californians."

8. **Improve the effectiveness of consumer and homemaking education and to reduce the limiting effects of sex-role stereotyping on occupations, job skills, levels of competency, and careers.**

   - Three projects were funded with Title III B-Consumer Homemaker Education monies to improve those programs;

   - One project specifically targeted improving physical requirements for women prior to entering non-traditional programs and employment; and

- A majority of the single parent, displaced homemaker, and counseling projects emphasized enrollment in non-traditional vocational programs.

9. **Authorize national programs designed to meet designated vocational education needs and to strengthen the vocational education research process.**

   - More than three projects surveyed national and international business and industry to determine vocational education needs;
   - A project designed for single parent, displaced homemaker, and non-traditional student programs established communication with similar national organizations; and
   - Many of the projects targeted toward developing model programs or curricula conducted research nationally.

Impact of Special Projects in Terms of State Goals

Each of the thirteen State Goals follows with discussion of how special projects met or complemented it.

1. **To stimulate the improvement of vocational education programs and services which incorporate appropriate basic and employability skills and new technological advances of business and industry.**

   - Numerous projects were designed with business and industry input to better serve the state's labor needs;
   - At least 12 projects evaluated and analyzed curricula and programs in growth occupations and/or occupational clusters;
   - Two projects were specifically designed to conduct a study of local labor market needs and disseminate the information for use in vocational education statewide; and

- Programs were developed and expanded to evaluate new technology and equipment.

2. **To implement a vocational education funding system that incorporates program/course approval.**

   - No projects were developed to implement a vocational education funding system in this manner, although model curriculum modifications and competencies were disseminated statewide.

3. **To improve and expand linkages with the business and industry sectors, employment and training agencies, and other providers of vocational education programs and services.**

   - As stated above, numerous projects were developed to meet the needs of business and industry;

   - Nearly 20 articulation projects, emphasizing linkages with secondary schools, adult schools, and regional occupational programs/centers were funded in 1988-89 and 1989-90; and

   - Over the two funding years, at least 20 projects were funded to state agencies, required cooperation between the public, private and education sectors, and/or established resources or data for business and community contacts;

4. **To ensure equal access to vocational education opportunities for special needs students.**

   - In 1988-89 and 1989-90, more than 50 percent of the projects funded were designed to serve special needs students;

   - One project was specifically designed to technically assist colleges to comply with the Federal Rehabilitation Act by developing a resource handbook;

   - A number of programs were developed to target minority students, including retention strategies, employment and internship opportunities;

- More than $700,000 was apportioned to supplement vocational training to incarcerated persons; and

- Projects were developed which solicited input from social services, GAIN and Department of Rehabilitation, and those agencies participated in numerous advisory committees.

5. **To maintain and improve vocational education opportunities for special needs students.**

   - In 1988-89, two projects were funded under Title A-Handicapped monies and specifically designed to improve services and programs for disabled students;

   - In both 1988-89 and 1989-90, more than 25 projects were developed to improve services and programs for single parents, displaced homemakers, non-traditional students and single pregnant women. Additionally, communication and cooperation was enhanced by further regional organization of single parent and displaced homemaker program coordinators;

   - A clearinghouse of single parent, displaced homemaker, and non-traditional information was developed to link the coordinators of those programs statewide; and

   - Many projects targeted "new Californians."

6. **To develop instructional materials designed to prepare students for employment in new, existing and emerging occupations.**

   - During both funding years, at least 12 projects evaluated and analyzed curricula and programs in growth occupations and/or occupational clusters;

   - Information was shared in curriculum evaluation and modification projects statewide; and

   - At least five projects were designed to certificate or qualify for licensed employment.

7. **To develop consumer and homemaking skills of individuals.**

   - Three projects were funded with Title III B-Consumer Homemaker Education monies to improve those programs;

8. **To assist in making occupational choices through improved guidance services and activities.**

   - "Coordinating" and regional organization projects were developed to give support to similar projects in the areas of articulation and single parent/displaced homemaker programs, thereby improving the quality of services provided to students; and

   - More than 10 projects targeted staff development for counselors, many of which focused on developing counseling strategies to meet the needs of "new Californians", single parents, disabled students, and limited English students.

9. **To improve placement of students who have gained employable skills.**

   - Two projects specifically were developed to improve the quality of placement services provided to students, while many others incorporated improvements in placement services into their job training projects; and

   - Numerous projects collaborated with business and industry to provide employment, internships, or mentorships.

10. **To assist those already employed in the maintenance of previous acquired skills or in the development of new skills to advance or change employment fields.**

    - In both funding years, more than 12 projects which analyzed or revised curricula were designed to update and match competencies to meet licensing requirements and local labor market needs.

11. **To broaden the participation level of local vocational education personnel in the state vocational education agencies' planning and policymaking process.**

- While no specific project could be determined to meet this goal, projects which enhanced regional coordination, such as articulation and single parent/displaced homemaker programs, facilitated the process for local issues and concerns to be organized and involved in state planning.

12. **To provide a comprehensive quality staff development program for all vocational education personnel at the local regional and state levels.**

- Nearly one-third of the projects were designed to improve professional development and more than 20 specifically targeted instructors;
- Programs were also developed to improve administrative and counseling services through staff development;
- Five articulation projects were funded to serve as models for resource and technical assistance; and
- At least four projects created peer reviewers to provide planning, directing, and evaluation management services statewide.

13. **To provide better coordination of federal and nonfederal funds in support of vocational programs and services.**

- No specific evidence was collected regarding coordination or federal and nonfederal funds in relation to special projects in this study.

In addition to the individual projects which reflect and complement the federal purposes and state goals for vocational education, the overall purpose of special projects funding is to respond to and meet the goals of the Act and the state.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions are based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected during interviews with project directors, project staff, Chancellor's Office staff, and the document review. The conclusions and recommendations are offered below in sections on special projects evaluation, project achievements, administration and management, and dissemination.

Special Projects Evaluation

Two problems were identified in conducting this evaluation of 1988-89 and 1989-90 special projects: the inability to interview staff from **all** of the projects funded to produce a complete summary of projects and the need for an evaluation of special projects to occur in a timeframe in which project contacts would still be familiar with the projects from the given funding cycles.

Recommendations:

Project directors need to be clearly aware of pending special projects evaluations so that they or knowledgeable staff will available for interviews. In many cases during this study, project contacts did not return calls or no current staff at the contracting agency could provide details on past projects.

The evaluation of special projects should be conducted as soon after the culmination of the funding cycle to ensure best possible results from data collection activities. In many cases, project contacts could not give specific details regarding projects because many of the projects had been completed more than two years earlier.

Project Achievements

A significant majority of special projects accomplished most or all of their proposed objectives. The variety of products produced through special project funding was extensive, including databases, resource and instructional documents, newsletters, videos, curricula, software, and

promotional materials. In accordance with VEA emphases, communication, linkages and partnerships were established and/or improved with business and industry, as well as between the public and private sectors. A number of projects established mechanisms to ensure institutionalization beyond special projects funding. Areas for improvement in project achievements include a lack of knowledge at the local level to conduct extensive evaluation procedures to evaluate and improve the quality of projects, minimal funding for projects targeting handicapped students, lack of commitment to institutionalize once funding has ended, and lack of knowledge of similar projects which could serve as resources. Overall, the achievements of local and statewide projects served to meet and further the goals of the state and nation.

Recommendations:

Improved local evaluation should be facilitated through the Chancellor's Office by developing specific activities and strategies for local project evaluation. Although there are evaluation activities and strategies in use, many of the projects did minimal evaluation bocause they lacked knowledge of feasible evaluation procedures. Others assumed their project would be evaluated by third-party and conducted no internal evaluation activities.

Alternative funding sources should be identified for local projects which may want to institutionalize their project once funding has ceased, but lack the necessary support or funding. The long-term impact of special projects will be impressive if a majority of these projects are institutionalized, continued, and expanded.

A resource document or database of all special projects, past and current, should be developed and disseminated to the colleges to assist in eliminating duplicative efforts and provide resources for similar projects. Many of the project directors felt their projects could have been maximized by knowledge of prior projects which could have reduced duplication and "reinventing the wheel."

Administration and Management

More than two-thirds of the projects in the funding years received delayed funding. Project contacts universally stated that the timeliness of funding was critical to the success and lack of success of their project. In addition, communication between state staff and local projects regarding funding delays needs to be improved. Contracting agencies expressed interest in

more field consulting by project monitors to improve the administration of their projects and requested the Chancellor's Office provide more monitors to lessen the number of projects for which each monitor is responsible.

Recommendations:

The process for special project approval and start should be simplified to ensure minimum delays in funding. The window between verbal approval and contracting needs to be as short as possible since many projects must commit resources and time based on their proposed start rather than contract approval. Project directors felt the organization required to prepare the project and establish the resources and contacts was undercut by up to six months delay.

The Chancellor's Office should allow more time and resources for project monitors to visit all of their projects to alleviate future reporting problems, miscommunication, and ensure that project directors and staff understand the direction of their projects to accomplish proposed goals. This recommendation is especially needed for first-time contractors.

Although project monitors averaged more than six projects for which they were responsible, some monitored up to 17. An average of six to eight seems reasonable to achieve the best communication and results possible, but no monitor should be responsible for more than 10 or 12 projects.

Dissemination

As mentioned above, a wide variety of products were produced as a result of special projects funding. ETI staff did not compare proposed dissemination activities to final reports to determine the extent to which dissemination was carried out, but a need for a document, database, or clearinghouse of previous and current special projects products was determined.

Recommendation:

The Chancellor's Office should establish a mechanism for past and current documents and products produced through the Chancellor's Office funding to assist in eliminating duplicative efforts and provide resources for similar projects.

APPENDICES

SITE VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SPECIAL PROJECTS

Project Contractor:_____

Project Name:_____

Name of Project Director:_____

Interviewer:_____

PROJECT INFORMATION:

1. Please briefly describe the overall purpose of your project.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What specific objectives were proposed?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Were you able to complete all of your proposed objectives?

a. If not, what was the reason for the delay?

b. Which objectives remain uncompleted?

4. What major activities were undertaken to mee: the objectives of the project?

5. Did you complete all activities proposed? (If no, why not?)

6. What specific elements of your project were successful?

Unsuccessful?

7. How many people did the project directly serve?

8. Were you able to begin your project on the proposed starting date? (If no, why not?)

9. How long did your project last?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

10. How many staff (FTE's % ?) were involved in the project?

11. Were there any major staffing changes made during the project?

12. What type of staff training was required to begin (or during) the project?

13. Were there any barriers which affected project staffing?

14. a. Did you form an advisory committee for this project? (If yes, who was on the Committee?)

b. What role did the committee play in the project?

15. Were there any barriers in assembling your advisory committee? (If yes, how did you overcome these?)

16. Did you receive other community involvement? (If yes, what?)

17. Was this project the result of any collaborations? (If yes, who were involved?)

18. Were there any barriers faced in collaborating? (If yes, how did you overcome these barriers?)

19. Did you communicate with your State Monitor on a regular basis? How often?

_____

_____

20. In your opinion, how helpful was your State Monitor in assisting you with your project?

_____

_____

_____

21. Do you have any recommendations for the Chancellor's Office to improve the communication and management of special projects?

_____

_____

_____

PROJECT FUNDING:

22. Did you use 100% of the funding allotted? (If no, why not?)

_____

_____

_____

23. a. Did you make any amendments to your contract?

_____

_____

_____

b. If yes, what caused you to amend your contract?

_____

_____

_____

24. Did you receive any financial, material, or technical contributions from business and industry?

_____

_____

_____

25. Did you plan to institutionalize this program when the grant ended? (If not, why?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

26. Were any steps taken to facilitate this?

_____

_____

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

27. What positive outcomes resulted from the project?

_____

_____

_____

28. Were there any unanticipated outcomes?

29. a. Did you conduct an evaluation of the project?

b. If yes, who conducted the evaluation?

c. If yes, what were the findings of the evaluation?

30. Did you produce a final report/product to document the outcomes of the program?

31. To whom was the final report/product distributed?

32. What additional resource materials, if any, were produced by this project?

33. (If yes) To whom were the resource materials distributed?

34. Were these materials made available to other interested LEA's (colleges, cbo's etc.)?

35. In your opinion, how did your project complement state and local efforts for vocation education?

36. How do you feel this project could have been improved?

37. In what ways might the Chancellor's Office better assist projects such as yours?

38. Do you have any additional comments regarding your project?

TELEPHONE SURVEY OF PROJECT DIRECTORS
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SPECIAL PROJECTS
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Name of College or Contractor: _____

Name of Program: _____

Name of Project Director: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Informally:

Hello. My name is _____ and I am calling form the Evaluation and Training Institute. We have been contracted by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges as a third party evaluator to study the vocational education special projects. You should have received a letter from Daniel Estrada indicating that we would be calling to discuss your project. I would like to ask you a few questions about your project. Is this a good time to talk?

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Please briefly describe the overall purpose of your project

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What specific goals did you establish for the project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Approximately how many people did your project directly serve during its funded period?

1 Fewer than 50
2 Between 50 AND 100
3 Between 101 and 150
4 Between 151 and 200
5 More than 200 people (please specify _____)
6 Not applicable

4. What were the major activities which you implemented to achieve your goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5a. In your assessment, did you exceed, meet, or fall below of your goals for this project?

1 Exceeded goals
2 Met goals
3 Fell below goals

5b Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

6. How many full-time staff or full time equivalents were there for your project?

1 One
2 Two
3 Three
4 Four
5 Five
6 More than five (please specify _____)

7a. Was there a planning or advisory committee for the project?

1 Yes
2 No

7b. If so, how many people were on the committee?

1 Less than five
2 Five to ten
3 More than ten

7c. What was their role?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Did you receive any community support (in the form of in-kind materials, staffing, technical support, etc) for your project?

1 Yes
2 No

9. Was your project part of a collaborative initiative?

1 Yes
2 No

9a. If so, who were your partners? What was their role?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. How often were you in touch with Chancellor's Office staff with reference to this particular project?

1 Weekly
2 Twice a month
3 Monthly
4 Every other month

5 Only for Project Director meetings
6 Never
7 Other (specify _____)

11. Did a third party evaluator ever visit your project?

1 Yes
2 No

12. Did your State Monitor ever visit your project?

1 Yes
2 No

12a. (IF YES) How many times were you visited?

1 Once
2 Twice
3 Three times
4 More than three times

13a. Would you say that your State Monitor was very accessible, somewhat accessible, or not very accessible to you?

1 Very accessible
2 Somewhat accessible
3 Not very accessible

13b. Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14a. Would you say that your State Monitor was very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not very helpful in assisting you with your project? Why?

1 Very Helpful
2 Somewhat helpful
3 Not very helpful

14b. Why?

_____

_____

_____

15. Do you have any suggestions on how the State could have been more helpful to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

FUNDING

16. Was your contract approved on time so that you could begin your project on schedule?

1 Yes
2 No

17a. Were the amount of funds allocated adequate?

1 Yes
2 No

17b. If no, Why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

18a. Did you utilize all of the funds you received?

1 Yes
2 No

18b. If no, why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Were you adequately informed about how the budget process worked?

1 Yes
2 No

20. How could the budget process be improved?

_____

_____

_____

_____

OUTCOMES

21. What were some of the positive outcomes of the project?

_____

_____

22. Were there any unanticipated outcomes? If so, what were they?

23. What were some of the negative outcomes?

24a. Did you conduct an evaluation of the project at the conclusion of special funding?

1 Yes
2 No

24b. If so, who evaluated the program?

24c. Briefly, what were the results of the evaluation? [Please send a copy of the evaluation report to ETI.]

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

25a. What type of final product(s) was produced as a result of your project?

1 Final Report
2 Video tape
3 Oral presentation
4 Workshop
5 Resource materials
6 Curriculum
7 No products were produced
8 Other (specify _____)

25b. Who was the final product distributed to?

1 Participants
2 Instructors
3 State Monitor
4 Other Project Directors of similar projects
5 Dean of Instructors
6 Dean of Vocational Education
7 Other Secondary School Reps
8 Other Post-Secondary School Reps
9 Other (specify _____)

26. In your opinion, how did your project complement state and local efforts for vocational education?

_____

_____

39. Do you have any additional comments regarding your project?

THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SPEAK WITH ME.

Monitor:_____
Interviewer:_____

Evaluation of Vocational Education Special Projects
Interview Guide for State Monitors

1. How were the projects for which you served as project monitor assigned to you? How would you evaluate this assignment process?

2. Overall, did the projects for which you served as monitor meet their stated goals and objectives? Why or why not?

3a. Given your perspective as a monitor for several vocational education special projects, what have you found to be key elements of successful projects?

b. What elements have been associated with unsuccessful projects?

4a. How would you assess your communication with staff from the special projects assigned to you? How often did you communicate with project directors in the field?

b. What recommendations do you have to improve communication with the field?

5a. In your opinion, what has been the impact of the vocational education special projects on the state goals for vocational education?

b. How have the vocational education special projects complimented the national goals for vocational education?

6. What unanticipated outcomes, if any, were identified from the projects you monitored?

7. How would you improve the overall administration and evaluation of vocational education special projects?

8. What recommendations do you have for future project funding?

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